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wards the accomplishment of this one object? If similar efforts should be made, why may not the nations of Europe and America, be awakened to such a sense of the enormities of war, that at some future congress they shall solemnly declare in the face of Europe and the world, that the *custom of public war* has been regarded by just and enlightened men in all ages, as repugnant to the principles of humanity, and of universal morality, and that the public voice in all civilized countries demands that it shall be suppressed, and that the universal abolition of it is conformable to the spirit of the age, and to the generous principles of the powers in this congress assembled?

ARTICLE IV.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

BY THE EDITOR.

- 1.—*Essays on the Principles of Morality, and on the Private and Political Rights and Obligations of Mankind.* By Jonathan Dymond. With a Preface by the Rev. George Bush. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1834. pp. 432.

THE author of this work was a member of the society of Friends, and a tradesman at Exeter, in the south western part of England, where he died at an early age, in the spring of 1828. He was already known to the public by an "Inquiry into the Accordancy of War with the Principles of Christianity." The present work was published after his death, and has passed through two editions in England. We recollect to have read an interesting notice of it three years ago in the Quarterly Review; a recent examination of the work itself has confirmed and increased the favorable impression we then received of its merit and value. We rejoice that an American edition has been brought out. It is a work which deserves, and we trust will secure, an extensive circulation and a thorough perusal. We heartily agree with the judgment of the Quarterly Review, Jan. 1831, that "the present work is one which the society (the Friends) may well consider it an honor to have produced; it is, indeed, a book of such ability, and so excellently intended, as well as executed, that even those who differ most widely, as we must do, from some of its conclusions, must regard the writer with the greatest respect, and look upon his death as a public loss."

It would be impossible within our limits to give any thing like a full account of its contents. We notice it principally because it comes within the sphere of our labours. The substance of the author's former treatise on War is embodied in this work, and we hope this circumstance will contribute to extend the knowledge of the author's views on this subject. As friends of Peace we are also interested in the circulation of this book, on account of its able discussion of the absurd practice of Duelling, and other kindred topics. Almost every important subject of private and public morality is examined. Finally, the whole spirit and tone of the work is good and calculated to do good. We do not agree to every thing the author advances; on the contrary, we differ from his views on many important points. In particular, at the very outset of the work, while combatting with great clearness and force the doctrine of Expediency, as advanced by Paley and others, he lays down another foundation of moral obligation, which, in our opinion, as effectually destroys the essential difference between right and wrong, as the theory he opposes. He makes the *command* of God the ground of moral obligation. The command of God is, indeed, the *maxim*, (maxima regula,) the infallible *criterion* of duty, but not the *ground* of obligation. God's command does not *make* a thing right; he commands it because it *is* right: and his command is a safe criterion of rectitude, but not the principle of obligation. To confound the criterion of duty with its ground, is to do away the essential difference of actions. This is briefly, but ably and conclusively shown by Professor Bush, in his Preface to the present edition. But though on this subject, as on several others, we should dissent from the author's views, yet at the same time, we are fully persuaded that few books have come out, for many years, which better deserve a thorough reading. A single sentence from the book will enable us to point out what, in our opinion, is the distinguishing characteristic of the work.

"Upon every subject of questionable rectitude that is sanctioned by the habits and the usages of society, a person should place himself in the independent situation of an inquirer. He should not seek for arguments to defend an existing practice, but should simply inquire what our practice ought to be. One of the most powerful causes of the slow amendment of public institutions consists in this circumstance, that most men endeavor rather to justify what exists, than to consider whether it ought to exist or not." p. 148.

Now the whole book is written on these principles. It is full of clear, strong, original and independent *thinking*, expressed in idiomatic and forcible language, and pervaded throughout by a very pure and elevated moral spirit. Therefore it is that we think the work calculated to do good,—to invigorate the mind and improve the heart. Among the many important subjects discussed in this work, and which will be read at the least with deep interest, are—Intellectual Education, the Nature of Civil Liberty, Forms of Government, Capital Punishment, Religious Establishments, and Slavery. For the

sake of those who may not have met with the author's former treatise on War, we here give the positions which he endeavours to establish in this work :

"I. That those considerations which operate as general causes of war, are commonly such as Christianity condemns :

II. That the effects of war are, to a very great extent, prejudicial to the moral character of a people, and to their social and political welfare :

III. That the general character of Christianity is wholly incongruous with war, and that its general duties are incompatible with it :

IV. That some of the express precepts and declarations of the Christian Scriptures virtually forbid it :

V. That the primitive Christians believed that Christ had forbidden war ; and that some of them suffered death in affirmance of this belief :

VI. That God has declared in prophecy, that it is his will that war should eventually be eradicated from the earth ; and that this eradication will be effected by Christianity, by the influence of its *present* principles :

VII. That those who have refused to engage in war, in consequence of their belief of its inconsistency with Christianity, have found that Providence has protected them." p. 428.

2.—*The American Quarterly Observer, conducted by B. B. Edwards, Boston.—The Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine.*

We do not notice these works in order to pass any judgment on them. The first named already enjoys an established reputation ; and the second, since the new arrangements under which it is now put out, has been fast gaining favour. We refer to them merely to express our pleasure, that the great objects to which we are devoted, should find such able advocates in these journals. In the *Quarterly Observer* for January, 1834, there is a long and well written article by President *Allen*, of Bowdoin College, on a Congress of Nations. —In the *Knickerbocker* for May, 1834, there is an article entitled "Peace Societies," which is continued in the number for June. It is written, we understand, by the Rev. *Timothy Flint*, formerly editor of this work, and well known in this country and abroad, by his "Ten Years Residence in the Valley of the Mississippi," and other works, as a man of genius, and an able and elegant writer. The articles to which we refer are not unworthy of Mr. Flint's reputation. They are written with great spirit, beauty, and eloquence. We wish our limits would permit us to give our readers some extracts ; but we hope they will not deny themselves the rich gratification of reading them entire.

In this connection we may remark, that the discussion of these subjects in some of our highest journals ; the prizes established in several colleges for dissertations ; and the various essays that have come out in the newspapers, some of them—as the series in the *Portland Christian Mirror*, over the signature of Perier—written in the highest style of ability ; prove that the objects of Peace Societies are advancing ; that the progress of their principles, though gradual, is sure. It is not a *popular* cause. It can hardly yet become so.